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MONTANA SCHOOLS

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HARRIET MILLER
Superintendent

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FOCUS ON CHANGE is the theme of the 13th Annual Conference of School Administrators, called by Superintendent of Public Instruction Harriet Miller for Monday through Thursday, March 27-30, at Helena . . . .

Those Teaching Machines will come in for expert discussion when Monday's program begins with an illustrated address by Thomas D. Clemens, Special Assistant to the Director, Educational Media Branch, U. S. Office of Education. . . .

New Ideas in Staff Utilization will be presented on Tuesday by William K. Ramstad, Staff Associate, Committee on Staff Utilization of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, headquartered at Stanford University . . . .

"And No Bells Ring", now-famous film produced by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, is on Tuesday's program. A dramatic report of the ideas developed by the NASSP's Committee on Staff Utilization, the film analyzes the shortcomings of conventional utilization of teachers, then explores ways in which new education patterns can be developed . . . .

New Laws Affecting Schools will be discussed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Harriet Miller at Monday's session; on Tuesday afternoon, a special session on school finance and budgeting procedures will be conducted by State Aid Administrator John Campbell . . . .

Group discussions are scheduled for Monday; on Tuesday, a panel on practical aspects of staff utilization will be conducted, with Maynard Olson, High School Supervisor, Department of Public Instruction; Winston Weaver, Principal, Helena Senior High School; Homer Loucks, Superintendent of Schools, Malta; and guest speaker William K. Ramstad.

The Conference Banquet is planned for Monday evening.

A special two-day program for County Superintendents will begin on Wednesday. Features . . . .

The Social Studies, discussed by Mrs. Darlene B. Stephens, Eastern Montana College of Education . . .

The new Guide to Montana School Libraries, introduced by Mrs. Ruth O. Longworth, Executive Secretary, Montana State Library Commission . . .

A presentation of the new History Guide . . .

A panel on the 8th Grade Study Guide . . .

Master Teacher Presentation, with Mrs. Dorothy Bansch, 5th-6th grade teacher, West Side School, Helena . . .

Educational Television, with Dr. Erling Jorgensen, Montana State University, director of the current study being made by the Montana ETV Committee . . .

Address by Miss Lois Clarke of the NEA's National Rural Department.

SCHOOL FINANCE LEGISLATION: Implications for 1961-63 . . . .

The rate schedule of the Foundation Program will remain the same as at present; measures which would have increased the schedule were killed, despite strong support for an increase by the Montana School Boards Assn., the Montana Education Assn., school administrators and the Department of Public Instruction.

Based on the present rate schedule, the Foundation Program, statewide, will require more revenue in 1961-63 than in 1959-61, due solely to increased enrollments. It is apparent that the full amount required will not be appropriated.

For the state's share of the Foundation Program of 1961-63, an appropriation of approximately $21.4 million would be required . . . .

HB 437 (now apparently dead in the House Appropriations Committee) would come close to meeting this requirement; it would appropriate $20.5 million for the Foundation Program, or enough to provide a state equalization level of 96.5%, leaving a 3.5% "state deficiency" to be made up by school district property taxes. (This year the state equalization level is 94%, with a 6% "state deficiency.")

HB 374 and Substitute HB 373 together contain appropriations totaling $20.5 million. HB 374 appropriates $17.1 million to the State Public School Equalization Fund for the Foundation Program; this would result in a state equalization level of about 86.5%, and a "state deficiency" of about 13.5%.

Sub HB 373 would take $3.4 million (the remainder of the $20.5 million intended for schools which would be left after deducting $17.1 million in HB 374), and allocate it to schools not according to the Foundation Program equalization formula, but on a per capita basis.

HB 374 and Sub HB 373 have passed the House; if passed by the Senate and signed into law, the next two years will find some schools receiving more state money than at present, and other schools receiving less, because of the departure from the Foundation Program equalization method.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Harriet Miller opposed Sub HB 373 because the method of distributing state money would be changed in such a way that many schools will receive less state money than at present. (Under HB 437, while some schools would gain state money and others would receive the same amount as at present, no school would actually lose money.) Some schools would lose, under Sub HB 373, because this bill does not provide any "extra" money for schools; it merely takes some of the money away from the Public School Equalization Fund (for the Foundation Program) and distributes it by another method, to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others.

OTHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION will be reviewed in the next issue of MONTANA SCHOOLS, after the close of the legislative session and action by the Governor on those bills now on his desk. At this date, nine bills pertaining to education have been signed into law, and twenty-three bills are awaiting approval or veto.

ON YOUR CALENDAR? . . . . Sunday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m., the State Committee of the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools has called a meeting of Montana member schools; place -- Placer Hotel mezzanine, Helena . . . April 12-15, the Northwest District Meeting of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation will be held in Seattle.

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